

H I N T S
FOR PROVIDING
RESIDENCIES
FOR THE
PAROCHIAL CLERGY.

HUMBLY SUBMITTED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE
ARCH-BISHOPS AND BISHOPS
OF
IRELAND.

BY ONE OF THE BODY

DROGHEDA:
PRINTED BY CHARLES EVANS
M,DCC,XCL

PRINTED

FOR PROVIDING

RESIDENCES

FOR THE

PAROCHIAL CLERGY

RECENTLY SUBMITTED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN



AND

BY ONE OF THE BODY

DROGHEDA

PRINTED BY CHARLES EVANS

W. COOK

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H I N T S FOR PROVIDING RESIDENCIES FOR THE PAROCHIAL CLERGY.

THE defective settlement of the Church of Ireland, arising from the inadequate number of its clergy, and this occasioned principally by the want of residencies for them, hath long been acknowledged and deeply lamented by its friends; particularly by the present Bishop of Cloyne, in a pamphlet published about five years ago (1). The proverb, indeed, says, that a knowledge of the disease is half the cure; but of what avail is this knowledge, unless, in consequence of it, proper remedies be prescribed, and duly administered? After being thoroughly acquainted with the causes of a disorder, and not to exert endeavours to remove them, argues in all cases a supineness not easily to be accounted for. But, when the malady is of a nature that threatens the very vitals of the constitution, as his Lordship hath fully and ably shewn that this does; the neglect seems to be scarcely excusable. Since, then, no remedies have been attempted by the abler and better established members of the faculty (though so earnestly

(1) The edition of the Bishop of Cloyne's pamphlet, which is and will be referred to in this work, is the 9th—
Printed by W. Sleater, 1787.

called upon by his Lordship) for removing this radical and dangerous distemper in the ecclesiastical constitution, it cannot surely be deemed over-presumptuous even in one of the obscurest of the body, humbly to submit to the consideration of the judicious and experienced, a recipe for the complaint; which, however empirical it may, perhaps, at first sight appear, yet may justly lay claim to some degree of attention, till a more scientific one is offered.

THE recipe is simply a revision of our Valor Beneficiorum. The idea was suggested by meeting some years ago in a London Chronicle, the annexed return of the income of six English sees (2). When I saw in the register, usually bound up with our almanacks, how they were rated for first fruits, and then had recourse to our Valor to know how an equal number, reputed to be the lowest in this kingdom, stood charged for that tax, I was astonished, as every one must be, at the disproportion. It occurred to me then, and I have ever since retained the same opinion, that, were our benefices put in this respect on the same footing with the English, it would in time, and that not very distant, produce a fund, which would furnish glebes for many of our poorer parishes, where resident efficient clergy are most wanted.

THE reasonableness and propriety of a new Valor must be put beyond all controversy, if it be recollected, that Winchester alone pays 2,873l. 18s. 1d. first-fruits, which is nearly as much as is paid by all the bishoprics in Ireland together; and that the English sees, though far inferior to the Irish in value, are rated at 22,757l. 17s. 6d. and are, besides, subject to an annual payment of 2,275l. for tenths; and though ours are exonerated from this latter demand, yet they are chargeable with but

(2)	Chester,	L. 500	Bristol	L. 400
	Landaff,	200	Rochester,	500
	Gloster,	500	Oxford,	400

a trifle above 3000*l.* for first-fruits. The comparatively uncultivated and uncivilized state of this kingdom, with respect to England, and its consequent poverty (3) at the times when the valuations for both were made, accounts in a good degree for this disproportion. Besides, as the tax went into the privy-purse of the King of England, as temporal head of the Irish Church, and being of course a drain of the national currency, it was probably made the lower, in order to lessen that evil. From the very great rise in the rental of Ireland, the improvement and increase of her agriculture and commerce, and consequently of her wealth since those periods, particularly within the last half century, the former cause is, happily, in a considerable degree done away, and it is reasonably to be expected, will be more so every day; the latter no longer exists, since whatever is now raised in this way must centre amongst ourselves. The faultiness also of our present Valor, abstractedly considered, is a forcible argument for a revision of it; for upon investigation it will be found, that many of our poorest parishes are rated higher than the richest; (4) that a vast number of nearly the most considerable in value, being rated in the King's books under the chargeable income, do not pay any thing; not a few, that ought to have been charged, are omitted entirely; and some, liable to the payment, cannot be come at, their denominations having been changed, and their antient names lost.

(3) This is evident from three-fourths of our parishes being rated under 5*l.* and very many of them from 3*s.* 4*d.* down to one penny. See Valor Ben. Ecol. Hib.

(4) I could name a parish, now worth 1,400*l.* per ann. in the gross, which is rated at 7*l.* 10*s.* only; and another nearly adjoining, scarcely worth 140*l.* rated at 17*l.*—I could also name many from 300*l.* to 800*l.* per ann. which, being rated under the chargeable income in the King's books, are exempted from payment. But, in truth, this case is almost general, inasmuch, that all the benefices in the diocese of Cloyne, reckoned to be one of our best patronages, do not on this account produce to the fund 30*l.*—I do not mean 30*l.* communibus annis, but that sum in the whole; that is, if every benefice in it were at this moment vacant, they would produce altogether but 7*l.* 10*s.* for each of the four ensuing years, were it worth while to collect such a trifle from so many hands.

The authority for the first fruits of the quoted fees in both kingdoms is indisputable. The English being taken from Bacon's Liber Regis, and the Irish from the Valor published in 1741, by order, and under the inspection of the Trustees. The authority, indeed, for the present incomes of the bishopricks, being only that of general supposition or private information, which are often erroneous, is not, neither can it possibly be so authentic; and, accordingly, I have since found the newspaper representation of the English fees to be much under their real value. But the annexed return of them, having been obligingly furnished by one of our Prelates, formerly an English beneficed clergyman, may be depended upon to be as near to the truth as representations of matters of this nature can reasonably be expected to be. The contrast is still worth noting particularly. (5)

Six English fees, amounting to 6,100*l.* only, are chargeable with 1,923*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* besides above 190*l.* per ann. tenths for the augmenting of small livings, and the relief of the inferior clergy. Whereas six Irish ones, amounting to 14,000*l.* are taxed with only 240*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* first fruits, and nothing for tenths, towards the same laudable and national purposes. It is obvious, that, were the Irish rated in proportion to the English, they would be chargeable with 5000*l.* for first fruits; and vice versa, were the English rated in proportion to the Irish, they would be scarcely chargeable with 100*l.* so that it demonstratively ap-

	Reputed Income.	First-Fruits.		Reputed Income.	First-Fruits.
(5) Chester,	L. 1,500	L. 420 1 8	Killala, &c.	L. 2,700	L. 33 6 8
Landaff,	800	154 1 3	Cork, &c.	2,500	50 0 0
Gloster,	1,100	315 7 3	Down, &c.	2,700	30 0 0
Bristol,	900	294 11 0	Killsloe, &c.	2,000	20 0 0
Rochester,	800	358 4 0	Dromore,	2,200	50 0 0
Oxford,	1,000	381 11 0	Clonsfert.	1,900	37 6 8
	<u>L. 6,100</u>	<u>L. 1,923 16 2</u>		<u>L. 14,000</u>	<u>L. 240 13 4</u>

pears

pears the English pay twenty times as much as the Irish; and, were the latter subject to tenths, in proportion to the former, they would be liable to nearly 1400l. per ann. on that account.

If then, these representations be even nearly true, and the calculations not materially incorrect, what can more strongly evince the reasonableness and propriety of a revision of our Valor? And, if the bishop of Cloyne's observations on the ecclesiastical state of the kingdom be just, what can more irrefragably prove the necessity of it? But in truth, it is infinitely more difficult to account for the measure having been so long neglected, than to shew the reasonableness, propriety, and necessity of its taking place now. Unquestionably, it never could have struck the rulers and governors of the Church in these lights, otherwise it is not possible, but their lordships must long since have given it that attention which it seems to deserve. It is however well known, that the ablest and most diligent ministers have frequently overlooked schemes, which have occurred to persons no way, in the general, remarkable for their sagacity or penetration; but which, when suggested to them, they have adopted or improved upon to their own credit, and the benefit of the nation. Unless, then, I am too partial to my own projects, as most projectors are apt to be, I make not the least question, now that the hint is given, but their Lordships will avail themselves of it; and eagerly embrace, and zealously forward a scheme, which promises so very great religious and political benefit, at an expence, of which none with the least shadow of justice can complain; since it is proposed to take place on future promotions only. Nay, I will venture to go further, and declare it to be my decided opinion, that, even if an equitable adjustment and a reasonable extention of the first fruits were to be adopted, so as to affect the present incumbents, their lordships would not oppose it on
 their

their own accounts ; most, if not all of them having, exclusive of their episcopal revenues, large independent fortunes, which place them far beyond the reach of feeling it ; but probably they would, at least certainly they ought to oppose it, on the ground of the unfairness of a retrospective tax ; and that it might bear hard on many of their clergy, who have large families, or whose affairs may be somewhat deranged ; or who, from long habit, could not without very great inconvenience alter their mode of living. But above all, they might justly apprehend, that the proposal would raise so powerful and interested an opposition, as might endanger the success of the measure in toto.

I HAVE not been able to learn in what proportion to their present income, English benefices below bishopricks are rated ; (6) however this might be readily known by an application to the Prelates of that kingdom ; for there cannot be a doubt but their Lordships would be happy to give all the assistance in their power to so good and pious an undertaking. Though I have thought it necessary to my purpose, as far as I had documents to go upon, to compare our Valor with the English ; yet I can see no reason to oblige us to copy them exactly in this respect. We are to consider the exigencies of our own Church ; and if they re-

(6) An English clergyman, now an Irish bishop, supposes the English first fruits to be on an average 10l. per cent. If so, perhaps it may not be thought unreasonable, that ours should be 20l. per cent. since they are exonerated from tenths, to which theirs are still subject ; unless crown or quit rent, to which a few are subject, may be considered equivalent to that tax. Certain it is, that the English ratage upon their bishopricks is upwards of 30l. per cent. It may be calculated thus. The six sees, noted before, by the most unquestionable authority amount to no more than 6,100l. Now supposing the remaining twenty to be one with another 3000l. per ann. (which is much higher than they are generally said to be) the whole amount of the English bishopricks will be 66,100l. and they are subject to upwards of 22,700l. first fruits, which makes the ratage about a third, or 33l. 6s. 8d. per cent. The first fruits on them have, during the last ten years, produced upwards of 21,000l. ours during the same period scarcely 1000l. so that including their tenths the English sees have in that time paid 43,000l. and the Irish 1000l.

It is further remarkable, that notwithstanding the English benefices are so highly taxed, we find B. Burnet, in the reign of K. William, proposing that the fourth or fifth part of every fine, paid for the renewal of church leases, should be appropriated to the augmenting of poor livings.

quire

quire it, and our benefices can bear it without oppressing our clergy; we should be rather ambitious of shewing our liberality. I must rely upon the candour of my readers, not so to interpret my intentions in what hath been now suggested, as if I had conceived the idea of prescribing the quantum of a new valuation, to persons so much my superiors in every respect, as they are, to whom principally I address myself at present; particularly in the knowledge of what the times and the ecclesiastical revenues can bear. Even were I capable of such presumption, I know it would be unnecessary; for I am persuaded it is not possible, that their Lordships can be unmindful of the utility and importance of the purposes to which the first fruits are appropriated; and the necessity there is in every point of view, civil as well as religious, of putting the national Church, especially in a kingdom circumstanced as this unhappily is, on the most efficient footing possible.

It may be objected, that such an augmentation of the first fruits, as would answer this purpose, would bear too hard on the clergy, who are expected to build, or whose immediate predecessors have built; in which cases two full years income is generally to be expended, or to be paid.

I PRESUME it will not be disputed, that it is morally impossible to devise any scheme of general utility, which will not, in some shape or other, bear hard upon individuals; and that it will likewise be acknowledged, that private and temporary considerations ever ought to give place to public and permanent advantage. But as great a paradox as it may at first sight appear to be, I have not the least doubt upon my mind, but that a reasonable and decent extension of the first fruits, which is all I plead for, would be so far from being oppressive on the body of the clergy at large, that in the end it would be advan-

tageous to them even in a pecuniary view. It may be observed to be too frequently the case with many of them, when they get preferment, that they immediately adopt a stile of living fully up to their newly acquired income: hence so many of them die in such wretched circumstances. Whereas by being obliged for the first four years to the proposed deduction, they probably may during that time acquire such habits of oeconomy, as will enable them to leave somewhat behind them for their families. When exonerated, they will feel as they would, if promoted to a benefice of so much greater annual value, as the payment amounted to, from which they were released, and this without the trouble or expence of removal.

THE difficulties attending the clergy who are to build, or whose immediate predecessors have built, are unquestionably in the general very great, and therefore ought to be considered with every possible degree of tenderness and indulgence. But supposing a new Valor at even 20l. per cent. let us see how far it would add to these difficulties. A benefice then of 200l. per ann. would be subject to 40l. that is, to 10l. for each of the first four years. Now give me leave to ask, whether a clergyman, thinking this an hardship, considering the loud and pressing calls there are to put the Church on a more efficient footing, would be worthy of the smallest preferment? There is not, it may safely be presumed, a bishop in the kingdom, who would not deem such a wretch, if such a wretch there can possibly be, undeserving of the salary of a common parish clerk. But it is to be hoped, there are very few, if any of the body, who, so far from grudging, would not from the very bottom of their hearts rejoice at having the opportunity of contributing such a mite to so good and important a cause.

BUT

BUT it may be said that even such a mite would be a very heavy load on a person who was not able to sustain it, which must be the case with every clergyman obliged to build, or who is saddled with two years income for a house, unless he has an independent fortune.

UNDOUBTEDLY it must. However, when a difficulty occurs, which cannot be entirely removed, the utmost that can be expected from the best contriver is to endeavour to lessen it as much as possible. Now, to do this in some degree, I beg leave to suggest to those, whose experience and zeal for the Church give them the best pretensions to regulate its administration, whether it would not be expedient, that every clergyman, who had obtained his bishop's certificate for having built within four years after the date of his institution, should be refunded the gales of first fruits, which he had paid, and be released from the remainder: that the two incumbents, succeeding next after a builder, should also be exempted: that the third, who would be subject to a year's income, should not be called upon for first fruits till three years after the avoidance of his predecessor; and the fourth not till two years. This, it is true, would retard the full benefits proposed from a new Valor; yet, still the friends of the established religion, tho' they could not expect to see them take place in their time, would have the comfort of reflecting that their posterity would.

THE shameful reluctance of the clergy to pay, and the very great difficulty in collecting the scandalous trifle, which at present goes under the name of first fruits, may be made a further objection to augmenting them.

THEIR being such a mere trifle may be a principal cause of the irregularity of the payments. It can readily be conceived, that a person

may forget he owes a shilling, or be careless about the payment of it, whose memory and attention a guinea would not escape. I imagine, I might safely appeal to the treasurer of the board, with respect to this observation; and ask, whether the arrears have not arisen chiefly on the smaller demands? it being scarcely worth the trouble and expence to enforce the payment of such inconsiderable sums. As to the reluctance of the clergy to pay them, I myself have known some instances, where it hath arisen from the unequability of the tax; and for their credit sake I hope this hath been the most general cause for the complaint. Not that by any means I would be understood to adduce this as an admissible apology for the defaulters; they having accepted their livings with their eyes open, leaves them without any possible excuse. But surely it must be allowed to be not a little mortifying to a person, to be called upon towards the same tax for ten or twenty times as much in proportion, as his next neighbour is. If a townland worth thirty shillings an acre were rated at two pence; and the adjoining one, worth only five shillings, were rated at two shillings; nay, if very large tracts of nearly the very best grounds in the district were not rated at all, will any person say, that our cesses would be raised so easily even as they are? That the beneficed clergy of Ireland are devoid of public spirit, or a becoming zeal for the religion of which they are the ministers, no person of candour will or can admit, till better arguments are offered than indiscriminate abuse and vague clamour. However, if the contrary be apprehended, laws can easily be made to ensure regular payments. In truth, there are plenty of them already, if they were executed; or rather, if it were worth while to execute them. Were the proposed regulations of the first fruits to be adopted, perhaps it may be thought expedient to have a collector for each diocese, as they have in England, who may previously apprise the clergy, when the demands

demands upon them will become due, and when they will be called upon for them.

THAT the proposed augmentation of the first fruits may be turned to the utmost possible advantage, the great difficulty will be to ascertain the different degrees of urgency between the several parishes, which require glebes, so as to settle judiciously and impartially the merits of the claims.

I SHOULD suppose it would be no very difficult matter for the bishops to procure from their several clergy a return of the income of their benefices, the number of acres and of Protestant inhabitants contained in them; and whether there be any and what quantity of glebe. And where the living consisted of an union of two or more parishes, these particulars of each separately; and where there is no Church, the distance of the centre of each parish, so circumstanced, from the most contiguous Church, in which Divine Service is celebrated. When these returns are made from the several dioceses to their respective bishops; then their Lordships may have a general meeting, where, after taking into consideration these and any other particulars, which may be necessary for their further information, they may form an arrangement of priority invariably to be adhered to, as the fund will admit. From the very minute circumstances of near 6000 parishes being noted in the Cyclopædia, under the word AUGMENTATION, and in Burne's Eccl. Laws, under the head FIRST-FRUITs, it may be presumed, that the trustees for managing that fund in England, must have had some such return to direct them. Such an ecclesiastical view of the kingdom, if even tolerably executed, would in many respects be a valuable acquisition; particularly, it would point out the parishes, which from extent require, and from income can afford, to have perpetual cures esta-

blished in them, a mode of increasing the number of our churches, and of resident efficient clergy, not liable to the unanswerable objections of Dean Swift and others against the splitting and dividing of parishes. Indeed it is so admirable a scheme for correcting the evils and inconveniencies, attending those immense territories in this kingdom, denominated parishes; that it were to be wished, that bishops and all other patrons had a power of presenting on condition, that the presentee should be obliged to allow from 50l. to 80l. per ann. for one or more perpetual curates, when churches and residencies were provided. It would be unpardonable ingratitude not to acknowledge here, that we are entirely beholden to our present judicious Metropolitan for this most excellent idea.

I know full well, that the Bishop of Cloyne hath mentioned in the pamphlet, (7) which has been and will be so often alluded to, schemes for accomplishing the objects I have in view; and I am persuaded, I need not be at much pains to be believed, when I assert, it is with the very utmost diffidence and reluctance, that I venture to observe upon any hint thrown out by so able and useful a prelate. That parliament may possibly have granted national money to less national purposes, than those at present under consideration, it doth not become me to enquire, much less to determine; but this I will not hesitate to pronounce, that in the present temper of the kingdom towards the clergy, and its opinion (whether well or ill founded, it matters not to the point in question) of their immense revenues, we cannot flatter ourselves with the slightest hopes, that the Commons will vote a sum for the purchasing of glebes. Indeed, when we have shewn by this, or any other more adviseable or more safely-practicable scheme, that

we have a becoming zeal for extending the Protestant interest, and the improvement of the people of every denomination; and that we are ready, as far as can reasonably be expected from us, to forward these important and national purposes; it may, and probably will rouse the laity to co-operate with us, as many of them lately did very liberally towards the establishment of a choir at Down-Patrick; but how can we expect zeal or liberality from them, till some degree of these virtues is found among ourselves; (as a body I mean; for thank God, there is no scarcity of zealous and liberal individuals amongst us) I must own, I am at loss to conceive. When the advantages in a few instances are seen of having a properly educated clergyman (8) settled in a neat house, with a decent Church, and a well-cultivated little glebe adjoining; the comfort which the society of such a person must be to the gentlemen of property, and the improvement to their children and tenants, in the remote and uncivilized parts of the kingdom, will, it may be presumed, induce others to wish to have the like settlements in their neighbourhoods, and to forward them at least so far, as to grant leases of the necessary grounds on terms not immoderate.

For it is on perpetual leases, and not on purchased lands, I would take the liberty of suggesting to the board the proposed residencies should be established; and this for many reasons, which I humbly submit to their consideration. The existing laws enable every proprietor of the soil, however circumstanced, to grant a limited number of acres in perpetuity, for a glebe at a fair rent; whereas many are under such restrictions, as preclude them from selling, or even from taking a fine. Many, who would not chuse to part with their property entirely,

(8) From the resolutions adopted by the Bishops, with respect to the qualifications which will be hereafter required from Candidates for Holy Orders, it may reasonably be hoped, that this in general will be the case for the future.

might have no objection to the granting of a perpetual lease ; at least they might prefer the one to the other. The trifling quantity of land, which would be wanted in each instance, would not justify the expence of seeing lawyers, examining titles, records and settlements, all of which are requisite to the making of a safe purchase ; and though every precaution may have been taken, yet after all, the title may be bad, and the money lost. I have heard of an instance or two, where it hath so happened. Besides very few, except on the most pressing necessity, would chuse to have the nature of their property, and their family affairs exposed. By this mode (if it were possible to dissolve so many unions, and there were encouragement for so many perpetual cures, as the proposed revenue would reach to provide glebes for) all the establishments might take place within a very short period ; whereas, it would require an immensity of time for a fund to accumulate, so as to be adequate to the purchasing of them ; or before opportunities would offer for the purpose. It would also obviate the clamour (unjust and unreasonable as it may be) against increasing Church-property. These leases should be taken by the trustees for the use of the several parishes and perpetual cures, specifically named. Where parishes or perpetual cures can be accommodated with episcopal or corporate lands, the rents should be paid in like manner by their treasurer. If, however, it be found necessary or adviseable, in order to expedite a settlement, to buy in the temporary interest of a tenant in possession of land of any nature whatever ; the purchase money, limited to a certain sum, may be paid out of the fund.

THESE encouragements, I would be understood, to be confined to parishes and perpetual cures, not exceeding 100*l.* per ann. except where glebes can be procured from Church and corporate grounds, in which
 case

case they may be advantageously extended to those of higher value ; as such property cannot be entirely alienated ; and the laws allow them to be granted for this purpose at a moiety of the present yearly rent per ann. or for any greater sum ; (9) which being to be paid regularly and without trouble by the treasurer of a public board, would greatly encourage such grants. Such reserved rents having been suffered to run into arrear by some improvident incumbents may probably be the reason, why more of these leases have not been made, in pursuance of the acts for the purpose ; since it must be acknowledged to be very awkward to, and might be deemed, however unreasonably, very ungracious in a bishop, to restrain, or to take out sequestration against one of his own clergy ; and not pleasant, even to a lay-landlord, to be obliged to take the like steps against his neighbouring parson. (10) Be this as it may, the proposed mode would unquestionably make the difference between not very desirable private security and a public fund. Besides, perhaps the clergy would be more active and diligent in endeavouring to procure glebes, and their friends more ready to grant them, were the rents to be paid for them, than if themselves were to be subject to the payment.

To provide glebes in general in all other cases for benefices above 100l. per ann. I take the further liberty of proposing, that bishops should be empowered to grant them in commendam to a neighbouring

(9) See 2d Q. Anne, chap. 10, continued for 21 yrs. by the 17 & 18 Geo. 3d. from 1777.

(10) A Prelate hath observed here, that the Legislature hath already given to land-owners an encouragement, equal to the proposed one, to part with their lands. If his Lordship will be so good as to re-consider the matter, I am certain he will be of a different opinion. The same Prelate observes, that the laws seem to have sufficiently provided for the payment of those glebes, which may be granted by land-owners, and that the mode seems to be in no degree objectionable. There is not a syllable said by the Writer to the contrary. He only observes, that it is not pleasant to ecclesiastical or lay-landlords to be obliged to put those laws into force, in the case of non-payment ; that the proposed mode (of the rents being to be paid by the treasurer of a public board) would preclude that disagreeable necessity, and would therefore be an additional encouragement to proprietors of the soil to grant perpetual leases for glebes.

clergyman for any term not exceeding two years, on the expressed condition, that the whole emoluments, except what may be required to be paid for serving the cure and for management, should be handed over to the bishop, and by his lordship to the trustees, for purchasing a glebe, or paying the rent of one for that particular benefice. These commendams to be exempted from stamp duties, and all other fees and charges whatsoever; and no oath to be required, but that usually administered to a sequestrator. In case the bishop should be translated before the expiration of the commendam, his lordship to have the power of presenting a clerk to his successor; and in case of death, his executors to have the same power which those of the English archbishops have with respect to their grace's options. It would be evidently to the advantage of government, and of lay-patrons, to be included in the act, since their advowsons must necessarily become of so much greater annual value, as the land purchased, or the rent to be paid for it, amounted to.

THE obtaining of glebes, by the exchange of a portion of tythes for land, seems to be attended with too many objections and difficulties, ever to take place in any considerable degree. Though the act of the 2d Geo. I. gives such a power to bishops, dignitaries, and prebendaries, yet I doubt much, whether it hath operated in a sufficient number of instances to be worth mentioning.

THOUGH I am conscious to myself of the purity and rectitude of my intentions in this undertaking, yet fearing that I may be mistaken, and knowing that mistaken, or even ill-timed zeal, may do more mischief to a cause, than avowed enmity, I have hitherto kept, and I mean at least for some time, to keep my thoughts on this subject as secret as I possibly can from every person, except the bishops, and some of the clergy

clergy of my acquaintance, of whose opinion and judgment I would wish to avail myself; and which I do therefore now most earnestly entreat. Besides, if my right rev. superiors, the rulers and governors of the church, should think there are any hints thrown out by me, which may be adopted, or improved upon to her benefit, my sincere wishes are, that their lordships should be the first cultivators, and reap the sole and exclusive merit of them; although by accident I may have been the original discoverer. If three or four hundred additional establishments (11) for resident efficient clergymen, which on all hands are admitted to be so woefully wanted, could be procured without any oppression, or sensible burden on the body of the clergy, and this without hashing our preferments into scraps and morsels, what renown would the pious and patriotic atchievement procure to their lordships? If the memory of Dean Swift be handed down to posterity with so much honour and reputation for being the ostensible negotiator, and, it may be, in some degree instrumental in obtaining a nominal 400l. per ann. for these purposes; might not that prelate, who would zealously take up this business, and pursue it to effect, look forward, without being over sanguine, to future generations calling him blessed? However, be their judgment and the event what they may, all that I humbly crave for myself is, that their lordships will be pleased to impute my thus stepping forward, certainly beyond my rank and station, and perhaps beyond my depth, to disinterested zeal for the established religion, the improvement and civilization of my native country, and the procuring of a greater degree of conciliation to the order of episcopacy, than seems unhappily to prevail in this kingdom at present.

(11) There are too many parishes small parcels of glebes, though not sufficient for the accommodation of a resident clergyman. These will only require some addition of land to render them adequate to the purpose; which being duly attended to, and with proper management may make the proposed fund reach to the number mentioned here.

THE substance of what hath been hitherto written having been shewn by a friend to some of the bishops, and a few of the clergy of rank and judgment, the following objections have been communicated to me, to each of which I shall take the liberty of subjoining such observations as have occurred to me, that they, to whose province the regulation of the church and its revenues properly belongs, may be enabled to see at one view what hath been said against, and as far as I am capable, what may be said on behalf of the scheme.

“ THE clergy in Ireland cannot afford a tax, as well as the clergy in England; because in the latter, nine-tenths of the benefices above 100l. per ann. have glebe-houses upon them, to which the presentee succeeds without any other expence, but repairs. The laws respecting dilapidations are more favourable to the successor, than the laws in Ireland. His tythes are paid without the same delay, arrears and losses, which too generally occur here.”

It were seriously to be wished, that nine-tenths of our benefices had glebe-houses upon them at any rate; but this is physically impossible, till more glebes can be procured. To procure them is the principal view in proposing an equitable adjustment and a reasonable and decent extension of the first-fruits, which would produce a fund of suppose ——— thousands per ann. Each thousand would pay rent for fifty glebes at 20l. for each.

THE great utility of the parochial clergy depending, so confessedly as it doth, upon their residence, not only every obstacle should be removed against, but every possible encouragement given to building, and every justifiable severity (12) inflicted on those who neglected to build.

(12) The laws, indiscriminately enjoining sequestration for neglect of building, seem to be rather too severe. Some clergymen

Now,

Now, since benefices which have houses upon them, are in the general subject to the loss of a fourth of two year's income, besides the advancement of the whole sum remaining undischarged for improvements, surely it cannot be deemed an unjustifiable severity, that a clergyman, having a glebe sufficient for residence, who was not able or willing to build, should be subject to the like loss of a fourth. This fourth, and every future fourth, which an incumbent would rather submit to pay than to build, to be deposited with the trustees, and appropriated by them towards a house for that particular benefice, and handed over, together with the accrued interest, to any future incumbent, who should undertake the building of one. These deposited fourths to be deducted out of the certificate, charging the benefice with two years income. If then clergymen were obliged to pay rent for the glebes, provided by the trustees, till they had obtained their bishop's certificate for having built, but to be refunded together with their first-fruits, as hath been suggested before, page 11, and the usual donation of 100l. and were moreover subjected to the loss of a fourth of two years income, in case of neglecting to build, there cannot be a possible doubt, but at no very distant period there would be a decent number, perhaps NINE-TENTHS, of resident efficient clergy. Particularly, if bishops upon vacancies, where there was no objection to character, shewed a decided preference to their clergy, who had built. This would answer a double end, the encourage-

clergymen may be too old, infirm or poor, or have too large families, for them to be enforced with any degree of humanity; bishops are therefore often obliged to dispense with them: and having this power, their lordships are exposed to unreasonable solicitations on this head; which perhaps they cannot always refuse complying with. The forfeiture then of a fourth may be considered as a fine for being indulged, and as the means of preventing the intentions of the Legislature, and the wishes of the bishops, from being altogether defeated. The best laws are certainly those which execute themselves; of which nature this seems to be; since it would necessarily lessen the number of applications, or raise a fund, which would ensure future building.

ment of building, and the forwarding of the exoneration of benefices; and of course would bring the pleasing prospect every day nearer of "our presentees succeeding as they do in England, without any other expence but repairs." What hath been said in this paragraph must pass for an answer to the repeated objections, which have been made to the scheme, as being an obstacle to building, and an obstruction to succession.

"If the laws in England be more favourable to the successor with regard to dilapidations than here," what is there to prevent us from copying them; there being nothing more common than for us to adopt useful English laws?—"If the clergy here receive payment for their tythes a year later," as I verily believe they do in general, it may be a good reason for postponing the payment of the first fruits for a year; but none at all, as I conceive, for a total exemption, which our present ratage, by every candid and unprejudiced person, must be allowed very nearly to be. This part of the objection may be easily obviated, by making the bonds for the first gale of first fruits not payable till two years after the avoidance of the predecessor, and so on; but still, in case of promotion or death, to be liable to a gale for every complete year the emoluments were enjoyed, after the charge for a house was paid off.—Since "ar-rears and losses too generally occur here" 10l. or 15l. per cent. may be deducted from the gross income, upon these accounts and for management. But as none of these difficulties, in any shape or degree, apply to our bishopricks, there can be no occasion for extending any of the proposed indulgences to them; except, perhaps, that of postponing the payment of their first fruits, till the "original" charge for the house is cleared. Neither repairs, nor additional buildings or improvements of bishops, or other clergy, should be considered; other-
wife

wife the advantages proposed from a new Valor might be protracted ad infinitum.

“ A new Valor cannot possibly be framed with any degree of relative
“ fairness and equality, unless the incomes of all the benefices in the
“ kingdom were accurately ascertained, which would expose our reve-
“ nues, give false ideas of our wealth, and thereby increase against us
“ the public envy, which is already too great; and, in the end, might
“ tempt government to raise a tax upon Church property.”

“ As to its giving false ideas of the wealth of the clergy,”
very many of those whom I have consulted on this occasion, and they
are some of the most intelligent and zealous of the body, are on the
contrary firmly persuaded, that it would materially serve to correct
false ones; and would irrefragably corroborate the Bishop of Cloyne’s
(13) assertions, that the Church revenue is not nearly what it is generally
supposed to be; indeed, that there is not a sufficiency to support an
adequate number of clergy to instruct and civilize the people. That
there are some livings of large income we do not deny; but supposing
there were many more than there really are, I imagine it will not be
easy to give a good reason why a proportional number of clergy should
not be enabled to live comfortably, and to leave a decent provision
for their children, as of lawyers, attorneys, and physicians, or even
of reputable mechanics and farmers. If it should be determined
by our wise reformers, to be for the benefit of the commonwealth
to reduce the national clergy to the level of those in France, it
is to be hoped and expected, that they will at the same time be
so equitable as to put them on the like footing in other respects.
What I mean is, that they will procure from his Holiness a bull

(13) See 3d section.

to dissolve the subsisting marriages of the clergy, and from our own legislature an act to prohibit them from entering into that state for the future. But to be more serious.

“ THE ascertaining of the income” hath always been done, and must continue to be done in case of building; and if in some cases, why not in all? Certain I am, there scarcely seems to be any thing, which the bishops have more at heart, than that there should be glebe-houses on every living in the kingdom; if then their lordships’ wishes could be gratified in this respect, it would be the case in all. It will be answered, that, in the case of building, the ascertained income lies dormant in the registry of the diocese, secret from every person, but those immediately concerned; whereas it being necessary to have the sanction of the legislature to the proposed regulations, our incomes would thereby become public to the whole world. This must be admitted; and I will admit likewise, that as it would be a novel matter of great magnitude, so would it be, for a time, of general curiosity and conversation; but it would soon be dropped, as subjects of more universal concern usually are; for whose concern would this be, but that of the clergy alone? We all know, that for a week or two after the annual publication of, and the debates on the pension-list, we can scarcely hear any thing besides talked of, and can for so long, recollect the larger and more extraordinary items; but how soon after does the subject give place to some new matter, which engages the public attention? It may be further said, that it will lead to other topics, at any rate not pleasant, and in the end, perhaps, detrimental to the clergy. The topics hinted at cannot possibly be more bandied than they are at present. Besides, if the scheme should take place, which I am assured from the very best authority is under serious contemplation, for government to advance for building

building at legal interest a sum equal to two years income, and the livings to be security for it, surely their value must be ascertained with at least as much accuracy as will be requisite, in order to bring the proposed scheme to effect. (14)

MOREOVER, I believe, it will be acknowledged, that no publication whatever can possibly make the incomes of the bishopricks better or more universally known than they are at present. We had them some little time ago pretty accurately calculated in the news-papers and magazines; they are likewise to be found in Young's Irish Tour, Vol. 2d, Part 2d. Neither, in truth, in this respect is the case with regard to our other benefices much different; there being very few, who turn their thoughts to such matters, that do not know very nearly the value of every living of consequence in the county or diocese in which they reside; and as to distant ones, QUOD PROCU A NOBIS, NIHIL AD NOS will hold good in this, as in other concerns of the like nature.

As to the last part of this objection, namely, that "in the end it might tempt government to raise a tax upon church property," though it is a considerable time since it was first communicated to me, I have not yet been able to bring myself to believe, that it was meant to be taken seriously; therefore, were it not for the very great respectability of the character from whom it came, I would probably have passed it by without notice, as I have done some others, in order to avoid being tedious.

(14) I REQUEST to know of what use money, appropriated to building, can be to a person, who hath no ground to build upon? But the proposed scheme is to procure glebes to build upon; therefore, it tends to make the intentions of government operative, which otherwise they can never become in any considerable degree. Legal interest on the sum advanced would be an heavy load on the general run of our benefices; much heavier, indeed, than putting our first fruits on a level with those in England. A glebe, rent free, of 20l. per ann. would more than counter-balance the additional ratage on the poorer parishes, and not materially affect the richer.

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FOR,

FOR can it be conceived, that government would lay a partial tax on its own patronage, and thereby wantonly and unjustifiably injure a body of men, on whose constitutional support they can always depend? Or, considering the known piety and attachment of the King to the established religion, his ministers would venture to propose it, or his Majesty would give the royal assent to it? Or, that the lords and commoners of weight would concur in lessening that provision, which is almost exclusively confined to their younger sons, brothers and dependants? Certain it is, that they have repeatedly of late shewn the direct contrary disposition, by throwing in their whole weight to protect the property of the church, when it was attacked. In truth, I may safely defy an instance since Queen Elizabeth's reign to be produced to justify any such apprehension. The agistment vote in 1736 is no exception; as it was not suffered to come before the King or lords. Besides, this vote is now reprobated on all hands, as being both unjust and impolitic. The present times would not bear so unconstitutional a proceeding. Not to mention, that the more usefully the church revenue is applied, the more secure her property in it will be. If, indeed, Divine Providence (as a just punishment for our sins, and particularly for our not devoting a reasonable proportion of our incomes, as our sister kingdom does, towards the advancement of a church, which in doctrine and discipline comes nearest to apostolical institution of any existing) should permit the democratical part of our constitution to get the ascendancy, we all know full well, that it is not a tax which will content them; we know, that it will not be a particle less than the whole; and we must submit to become stipendiaries, as is the case in Scotland and other countries, where the democracy became paramount at the Reformation; was the case in England during the Usurpation; and is now likely to be the case in France

France on the same account. Several corporations have solicited and obtained permission to levy local taxes upon themselves, to be applied to objects advantageous to their communities. Hath this measure ever been, or is it ever likely to be productive of unsolicited partial taxes on particular bodies of men, to be applied to the exigencies of the nation at large? and are not, in this respect, our case and their's exactly similar?

"It would be our wisdom to rest quiet on account of the number of dissenters and pretended friends, with whom we are surrounded."

I HAVE, indeed, frequently read and heard this maxim of quietism advanced by judicious, learned and pious divines against attempting any alteration in our liturgy; but never before to preclude our bishops from applying for further powers, when necessary, to rectify and amend the outward regimen of the church, to encrease residencies for the clergy, and to extend the public worship. Since it is our very great unhappiness to be "surrounded with such a number of dissenters and pretended friends," I should rather suppose it to be our wisdom to endeavour to lessen their number and to encrease our own; which great spiritual blessings and very desirable temporal advantages might, with the assistance of the Almighty, be reasonably to be expected, were there two or three churches and resident clergymen, instead of one, on every 20 or 30,000 acres. Besides, were the bishops and the body of the clergy heartily to espouse the measure, the liberality and piety of it might possibly convert many of our "pretended" into real "friends;" and meliorate the temper of some of the dissenters towards us and the established religion. Is it not at least deserving of the most mature deliberation of every

person, who has the Protestant interest sincerely at heart, whether it be not more probable that these would be the consequences, than what is intimated by the objector?

In suggesting this, I only copy the sentiments of the Bishop of Cloyne, who (speaking of the inadequate number of our churches and clergy, page 58) observes, "that it is an enquiry of a most interesting nature to every serious Protestant, and highly deserving the attention of the members of the legislature in particular." His lordship's remarks on this head have since been fully confirmed by the materials for an ecclesiastical map, which Dr. Beaufort has been so obliging as to communicate to the writer. From them it appears, that towards the close of the year 1788 there were but 932 churches throughout the whole kingdom, including those of the metropolis and other cities and towns, many of which contain more than one. If then we take into the account the number of churches there are in some of the counties of Leinster and parts of Ulster in proportion to the relative extent of country, we may form a tolerable judgment of the situation of the rest of the kingdom in this respect; and if we add to this, that there are not more than 800 incumbents, and that probably a third at least of these are obliged to be non-resident for want of glebes, the result will be melancholy indeed, and amply justify another observation of his lordship's, page 61, "that it can be no matter of surprize nor of reproach to the established clergy, that under these and some other disadvantages," taken notice of in the same place, "more converts have not been made to the Protestant church."

"THE attempt to put the scheme into execution would create divisions among ourselves."

How

How it can possibly be attended with this consequence, I own I am not able to comprehend. If, however, it should "create divisions," they must necessarily be confined to the bishops, of which no living mortal need, or ought to know any thing, but themselves; for as to the body of the clergy, I apprehend they would not, neither do I see any reason why they should be consulted; since the present incumbents are not to be affected, except in the case of promotion; and then the known adage of CAVEAT EMPTER would, in its strictest sense, be applicable to them. But were they to be consulted upon, or even to be affected by the measure, I should really think and hope better things of them, than that they would wantonly obstruct a scheme, recommended to them by their ordinaries, so manifestly tending to the advancement of that religion, whose interests they are bound by every obligation, divine and human, to promote to the utmost of their powers and abilities. As far as I am acquainted with their spirit in general, I should much rather be inclined to think and hope, that by far the majority of them would consider the proposed extension of the first fruits as the most useful application of that proportion of their incomes, which every Christian, and more especially the clergy, are obliged to devote in good works to their Supreme Patron and the Great Donor of all things. If, unhappily, there should be amongst us a few narrow-minded, luke-warm brethren, who would not view it in this light, the dread of public odium, if no better motive, would effectually deter them from openly avowing any opposition.

"The clergy taxing themselves would never be considered as an effort of public spirit, but as a symptom of redundant opulence, aiming at enlarging the body, for the sake of political strength."

ALAS! Have we so entirely forfeited our character, as in the general to be supposed incapable of acting from any, but selfish motives? I would fain hope and believe the case to be otherwise: but if it be really so, let us, in the name of God, instantly endeavour to remove the odious imputation; and if afterwards our good should be evil spoken of, we must only bear it with christian patience; and submit ourselves and our cause to Him who judgeth righteously. But it can hardly be supposed, that this will be the case; or even that ninety-nine out of an hundred will not consider it to be a very laudable "effort of public spirit." It was at least the observation of the only bishop I have had the honour of conversing with on the subject, (and in my conscience I believe him to be as intelligent a prelate, and as zealous for the church as any we have) that among the laity there would be but one opinion; which opinion certainly cannot be that contained in the objection. The increasing of the strength of the established religion, (or of the clergy, if you please) must be desirable to every friend of the constitution, because it is increasing the constitutional strength of the kingdom. Sure I am, that very lately it was so considered by a vast majority of the commons of Great Britain, in the debate on the corporation and test acts. The attempt to shew how much more forcibly the arguments and reasonings, made use of upon that occasion, apply to this kingdom, or the endeavour to prove how much more our ecclesiastical establishment requires to be strengthened than their's, would be offering an insult to the understanding of every Protestant in Ireland.

"WHEN our enemies are the proposers of alterations, we get rid of them by insisting on the danger and inexpedience of innovations.
 "If we bring forward a heavy tax on the body of the parochial clergy,
 and

“ and insist they will be mended by it generally and individually ;
 “ how can we rationally object to other projects ?”

I PRESUME it will be allowed, that there is a material difference between OUR ENEMIES PROPOSING ALTERATIONS detrimental to the church and clergy, and OURSELVES BRINGING FORWARD SCHEMES to strengthen the one, and to gain credit to the other. Innovations are in the general dangerous and inexpedient; and if I know my own heart, there are few more averse to them than I am. For my principles in this respect I might safely appeal to every respectable gentleman in the county where I reside, since very few of my level have more openly and avowedly set their face against them, than I have done. If, indeed, this were the first time that a tax (hereafter to be called by the name of First-fruits) was broached, I would readily admit it to be a “ dangerous and an inexpedient innovation;” but that not being by any means the case, I cannot see it in the light of an innovation at all. Many, as well as myself, have not been able to see it in any other light, than that of an equitable regulation and a necessary extension of an antient tax, now appropriated to the most useful and national of all purposes (15).

THERE are unquestionably different kinds and degrees of alterations and innovations; therefore admitting the scheme to come under the former predicament (for under the latter it cannot possibly come)

(15) AS TWIMICAL as Mr. Burke justly is to the violent and indigested projects of ignorant, furious, and unprincipled innovators; and to the demolishing of old and venerable structures, whose relative fitness and convenience time hath sanctioned, and shewn the utility of; yet he is very far from being averse to repairing and improving them, when they require it: neither, it may be presumed, would he be to enlarging the edifice; when, as in the present case, it became too small for the accommodation of the family; provided it were done by established and experienced artificers, with a due attention to symmetry and the design of the original planner.—See his letter on the French revolution, page 50 et passim; and more particularly his just, masterly, and patriotic encomium on the renovation of the Polish constitution, in his appeal from the old to the new Whigs.

I should

I should think the fair way would be, not to reprobate it merely for doing so; but to balance the advantages against the disadvantages; which if done with candour and impartiality in the present case, and the former do not preponderate in an almost infinite degree, I will without hesitation or regret give up the point. The appropriating of 300l. per ann. out of the deanery of Down towards establishing a choir was certainly an innovation, and seemingly a dangerous one. If, then, the guardians of the church had not reasoned in some such manner as this, it is impossible but their lordships must have signified their apprehensions of the precedent, when it came before them in their legislative capacity. (16)

It is to be hoped, we will never be so unwise or unreasonable as to object to fair and rational schemes (though attempted to be brought into disrepute under the suspicious and invidious appellation of PROJECTS) merely for their being alterations. To unfair and irrational ones we can always "rationally," and, I trust, effectually OBJECT, as long as our present constitution lasts; ET ESTO PERPETUA! Laying out my own money on my own farm may MEND my circumstances; but others taking it from me by violence to improve their's; or my being niggardly in the proper and useful expenditure of it on my grounds, would undoubtedly be attended with a quite different effect. We cannot take up a paper without seeing every principle of equity and common sense outraged; nor go

(16) I HAVE since been assured by the most undoubted and respectable authority, that this was actually the case; and that their lordships considered the donations contributed on the occasion to be a full counter-balance to the danger arising from the precedent. I flatter myself, then, that I shall not be deemed too presumptuous in humbly requesting, that their lordships will be pleased to extend the same reasoning to the present case; and to consider, whether the advantages proposed from, and the objects to be obtained by my innovating precedent, (supposing, but by no means granting it to be such) are not as great as those, resulting from that, to which they did not think it necessary to express any disapprobation.

into a company without having our ears dinned with projected innovations with regard to our tithes ; and a certain right hon. Commoner hath pledged himself to bring them forward. Now I must take leave to ask, whether it would not be our wisdom, or rather, whether it be not our duty to arm our friends with as many arguments as we can muster, in order to enable them to parry the impending blow ? And whether this, that we are about appropriating a part of our revenues to pious and national purposes, would not be as strong and as popular a one, as any they could possibly urge on our behalf ?

“ It would be giving an example of the propriety of making a
 “ radical change in the ecclesiastical constitution, which would be
 “ insisted upon in favour of the Legislature to effect a general
 “ change ; which they would stile a reform. It would be a radical
 “ change, because it would affect a measure deemed in the state a
 “ dangerous and injudicious alteration of too great risk to be hazard-
 “ ed, from the indisposition that appears to alter either the partial
 “ taxation of townlands by Grand Juries ; or the more signal partial
 “ distribution of the land-tax in England.

If, notwithstanding all that hath been said with a view to evince the equity, propriety, and necessity of the scheme, it must still be objected to, as being in some degree an alteration, (which is all that can possibly be alledged against it) it certainly must at the same time be granted, that an alteration obtained at the solicitation of a corporate body for the advantage of their community, and a detrimental alteration, obtruded upon them contrary to their desires, are two very different things : —that the first is an obliging concurrence with the wishes of those concerned ; the last an iniquitous and arbitrary act, to which our bitterest enemies, were they not blinded by bigotry and prejudice, would

for their own sakes express a pointed dislike, as being a tyrannical outrage against every principle of the constitution. The improbability of "the Legislature effecting," and the impossibility, whilst our present constitution lasts, of their succeeding, should they "affect a general change," (let them "style it a reform," or by what title they will) hath been considered, page 26.

"THE indisposition that appears to alter either the partial taxation of our cesses in this kingdom by grand juries, or the more signal partial distribution of the land-tax in England," are the only arguments adduced to prove the proposed scheme to be a "radical change in the ecclesiastical constitution; a dangerous and injudicious alteration of too great risk to be hazarded."

THAT our cesses have, by a late statute, been more equably and equitably adjusted, (to the very great contentment of our land-holders) I can positively affirm, from my frequent attendance at vestries in consequence of it, when I had it before me for my direction.

THE more signal partial distribution of the land-tax in England, I must confess, strikes me as being totally irrelevant. Since that tax hath taken place, estates have been purchased and re-purchased; but still under the faith and persuasion, that, if the exigencies of the nation required the tax to be augmented, the augmentation would be throughout the kingdom in a relative proportion to the original taxation. But it is to be hoped, that no ecclesiastical benefices have been bought or sold; if they have, it must be allowed to be contrary to all law and conscience; therefore, neither law nor equity are concerned in the case. It may be said, that gentlemen having purchased advowsons for the benefit of their families, which is certainly legal, is an objection to this reasoning. Such cases are rare in this kingdom; but

were they ever so common, the patrons should consider the tax, as all taxes should be considered, the relinquishing a part of their property for the security of the remainder; and whoever hath read the Bishop of Cloyne's pamphlet on the present state of the church of Ireland with any degree of attention, must acknowledge it to be in a very precarious and defenceless situation. In truth, this hath been acknowledged by very many of the objectors to the present scheme, and denied by none of them. At all events, the presentee, nor any one for him, cannot pay any thing; therefore the objection does not apply. Besides, the money raised by the proposed mode would still continue to be, what it now is, apart of the aggregate revenue of the church; that, raised by an equalization of the land-tax, would be diverted into a different channel from its present one; it would become public, instead of private property; and as this would affect so many people, the opposition to, and clamour against it would be general and violent. To the other, not an individual, with justice, or even with common decency could object; since no person can say, he hath either a natural or a legal claim to preferment. In short, could the difficulties, attending an adjustment of the land-tax, be as easily surmounted, and the objections to the measure as readily answered, as those attending the proposed regulations of the first-fruits, it is scarcely to be conceived, that ministers would have neglected it so long.

THE inequality of our Valor, though very objectionable, is not by any means the most objectionable circumstance relative to it. Nine benefices out of ten being totally exempted, and the ratage of those which are not exempted being so scandalously low, comparatively with the English ratage, or with the original idea, (17) are infinitely

(17) See the instructions of Henry VIII. to his commissioners for first-fruits in Bacon's Liber. Regis. If the ori-

more so. Many of the best friends of the establishment, to whom I have communicated these hints, have thought, that it would be much better to obliterate the very term from our statute-books, than to retain the present poultry burlesque on first-fruits of a nominal 400l. per annum; (18) for, say they, it exposes either our penuriousness, or our inattention; as general penury cannot be pleaded in behalf of our bishopricks, and very many of our other benefices. Ignorance of the state of the church ought at no time to be pleaded; much less since nine editions of the Bishop of Cloyne's pamphlet have been in circulation.

“WHERE is the occasion for so many additional churches and clergy, as are proposed by the scheme, in a country, in which there are so few Protestants of the establishment, as scarcely to afford the prospect of a decent congregation at present, or the probability of one in future?”

A GREAT deal might readily be said in answer to this question. Let it suffice, that, for want of a competent number of churches and clergy, many Protestants may have been lost to the nation; and if the inconvenience could be remedied, many might be gained. We

ginal idea before the reformation, when the tax was carried to Rome; and after, when it was usually parcelled out so, perhaps, not the most deserving retainers upon the court, was the first years income upon a moderate and liberal computation; surely it ought now to bear some degree of proportion, considering the very meritorious purposes to which it is appropriated. See Burn's Eccl. Laws.

(18) It is very much to be doubted, whether they amount to half this sum at present. They principally arise from the bishoprics; and as younger men have been of late raised to that dignity than formerly, succession must necessarily have been retarded. As nearly as can be calculated from the dates of consecrations and translations, as given in the almanacks, their first-fruits have not much exceeded 100l. per ann. for the last ten years. And if we allow 100l. per ann. more to have been actually received from the other benefices, it may, perhaps, be the utmost. I have lately been informed, that the English first-fruits produce an income of about 15,000l. Even admitting ours to amount to 400l. per ann. where is the proportion? Theirs are appropriated towards supporting the number of clergy they have; were our's upon the same scale, they would go a good way towards supporting the number we ought to have. Where is the difference between the object in either kingdom?

some

some time ago read in the newspapers of large and frequent batches of converts in Connaught, in Galway particularly. Now, I would be glad to be informed, how these can be retained, or they and their children be made real Protestants of, without church or clergy? Supposing the spiritual demand for the proposed additional number of clergy to be ever so scant, the temporal is very far from being so. To endeavour to civilize the people in those distant parts of the kingdom, and to persuade them to have some little respect for the laws, and less aversion to the establishment, are objects worthy of the greatest attention; and for which, I conceive, our revenues were partly granted. Every clergyman can read, some may be able to borrow, and a few to buy the most approved tracts on practical husbandry. Their little glebes will give them opportunities of introducing into those remote parishes modern improved culture; which, when seen to be successful, will probably be followed, to the very great emolument of the nation. Even the descendants of the clergy will be an acquisition to the constitutional strength in those Popish countries. Dr. Johnson mentions the utility of middle men in the islands and the distant parts of Scotland; as such, the clergy may be of great use here; to represent to absentee land-lords the wretched state of the people, and to obtain for them necessary relief, or judicious encouragement. I have known the clergy very serviceable in this way, even where the proprietor of the soil was resident. It is more than probable, it was from some such considerations as these, that Mr. Young, (19) in his Irish tour, recommends raising money off the county to aid and encourage the building of glebe-houses.

(19) See 2d part of 2d vol. page 86.

BUT it now demonstrably appears, that the spiritual demand for them is not nearly so scant, as hath been generally imagined. Mr. Bushe, (20) from the returns of the hearth-money collectors, computes our population to be about 4,200,000; and from the attendance of the different persuasions at their respective chapels in the house of industry, it is incontestible, that even among our paupers there are not three Romanists to one Protestant. The latter being of the higher rank, and in general the most industrious part of the people, the proportion throughout the kingdom is probably not so great; but admitting it to be three to one, there must be 1,300,000 Protestants; and supposing only 900,000 of these to be of the established religion, 400 additional churches at least must be necessary; since 1,300 would not be much above one church to 700 souls, who being scattered at great distances from each other, except in towns, render more places for divine worship in proportion to the number requisite, than if they were more compacted together (21),

“ THE dissolving of unions and making them separate parishes is in fact the splitting and dividing of livings, and reducing them to scraps and morsels, which you either really are, but I am more inclined to think, you only pretend to be so very averse from.”

THAT there should be a very considerable gradation of income in the clerical, as well as in every other profession and rank in

(20) SEE his letter to the Royal Irish Academy; also the Bishop of Dromore's Sermon before the Incorporated Society, 18th April, 1790. By a return from the Secretary to the House of Industry, dated 21st Oct. 1790, the numbers stood thus;—260 Protestants, 735 Romanists.

(21) I KNOW that Mr. Bushe's computation has been controverted; but, allowing it to be a third above our real numbers, it will very little, if at all, affect the argument; as 600,000 Protestants of the establishment would be above 460 to each of 1,300 churches: enough of all conscience!

civil society, none but the most envious levellers, or the most visionary reformers will maintain; whose wickedness or folly Mr. Burke himself cannot possibly hold in greater detestation and contempt than I do; neither can any one be more thoroughly convinced than I am of the utility, nay of the absolute necessity even of our richest preferments, in order to encourage superior learning and talents, to support the dignity of a national church, in a monarchy particularly, and to induce real gentlemen of liberal education and extensive connections to embrace the profession (22). All I aim at is, that they who get these preferments, should by the long-established mode of first-fruits contribute, as they do in England, a moderate, but at the same time a decent and reasonable proportion of the income towards strengthening their hold of the remainder, promoting the welfare and stability of that establishment, on which their title to the whole depends, and shewing their gratitude to God and the nation, who have been so bountiful to them, by distributing a share out of their abundance to the necessities of the same community; and the furtherance of the same great and important cause.

HOWEVER, admitting the case to be as represented in the objection, many, perhaps, as well as the writer, will not agree to there being much weight in it. Be a proportion of rich endowments ever so useful and necessary, yet surely the interests throughout the kingdom of pure religion, of a religion, moreover, whose polity and discipline are so judiciously adapted to,

(22) If three or four hundred additional livings or perpetual cures from 70l. to 120l. per ann. could be procured by the proposed plan, the richer preferments could be better spared for these purposes; since bishops would then have more frequent opportunities, than they have at present, of attending to the laborious merits, or the decent propriety of character in curates of standing.

and so intimately connected with our civil constitution, are at least equally so. Besides, undoubtedly, our first attention should be directed to the principal intentions of our revenues being granted, which unquestionably were the establishing and supporting a sufficient number of clergy, as far as those revenues would reach, to instruct and civilize the people. But if the matter be attentively considered, possibly, it may be found, that the dissolving of unions, on the plan proposed, will not be the "reducing of livings into scraps and morsels." The Bishop of Cloyne observes, page 60, that "a scanty maintenance for a clergyman in Connaught is often made up by an union of from five to nine parishes of twenty miles in extent." Now, I must contend for it, that one clergyman is as incapable of giving due attention to the temporals as to the spirituals of such an extent of country. Hence have arisen fatal consequences to the property of the church. Laxity in demanding, and the utter impossibility of collecting, or of obtaining by composition, the third part of its value. It may, therefore, be safely concluded, that three resident clergymen, aided by three glebes, rent free, of 20l. per ann. would each have as good an income as the one, who possesseth the whole at present.

"In some parts of Munster," his Lordship further observes in the same place, "by the increase of tillage clergymen have considerable incomes; but from such an extent of land as would require two, perhaps three churches to accommodate the different districts of it." Parliament hath at least of late shewn itself not only willing, but liberal (as is evident from the redundancy transferred to glebe-houses) in granting money for churches,
rightly

rightly judging them to be national objects, to which national money may with advantage and propriety be applied. There then can be no other admissible apology, why two or three churches have not been erected on those extensive districts, but the want of residencies for clergymen to attend them. Hence must be acknowledged the necessity of the proposed, or some other scheme for the purpose. Here also, as in Connaught, rely upon it, that a judicious disunion of parishes would not injure the income of rich preferments nearly so much as is generally apprehended. Where the clergy have such large territories, they are incapable of managing so many unruly people, as are usually contained in them, by the assistance of proctors and their own servants. They are, therefore, necessarily driven, contrary to their inclinations and interest, to let their livings to tithe farmers, who not unfrequently have as much profit by the bargain as the incumbent hath income. The real, or supposed oppression of these gentry, was the most general pretext and apology for the late insurrections and outrages in the South.

“THE country is loudly called upon to put the church on a more efficient footing; and as for this purpose it evidently stands in need of much addition to its own strength by public aids, it is maturely to be considered; whether it would be expedient, by a new Valor and a proportional tax, to lead the way in throwing the whole burden on itself. If the proposed plan were effected, whenever in future application were made to Parliament for assistance, the enemies of the church might immediately direct the attention of the Legislature to its own sources; and observe, that such a proportion in the pound would readily raise the supply solicited; and

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“ thus

"thus finally shut the door against all public bounty. This is really a serious objection to all those who are anxious for the establishment."

NOTWITHSTANDING the very great obligations I am under to this intelligent Objector for the candour with which he has treated my present attempt, and the useful information he has been so good to furnish me with; yet I must make bold to ask, whether it be likely to induce the legislature to refuse necessary or reasonable public aid towards strengthening the established religion, or to direct their attention for the raising of it to an unprecedented poundage on the revenue of the church, because the the clergy, (finding their first-fruits so very inadequate to the idea, and inferior to those in England; or rather being called upon by the equity and propriety of the case) lead the way in rectifying defects, which arose from peculiar circumstances, which no longer exist? "Our church requires to be put on a more efficient footing," and towards this the clergy merely desire, that the Irish Valor may be modelled by that of England; will this suggest a poundage tax to the imagination of the most visionary speculator? If it should, he can readily, and will be effectually answered, as long as our present constitution lasts. But though the country hath time immemorial been as loudly called upon, as at present, to put the church on a more efficient footing, hath it ever received the smallest "addition to its own strength" by public aids?" (23) And if we may judge of the

(23) The sum granted annually of late for building churches cannot be placed to the account of the clergy, exclusively of every other person of the establishment; all being equally concerned in having decent and comfortable places to assemble in for divine worship. So many of our principal land-lords being absentees, and such being in general the miserable poverty of land-holders, that, if churches be not built by

future by the past, is it ever likely to do so? Though there are 5,997 livings (24) or rather starvings in England under 50l. per ann. and of these 2,538 under 20l. per ann. and though nine-tenths of the people there are of the established religion, and in the general zealous for it, yet we do not find they have ever received any public aid, since the first-fruits were restored by Queen Anne. How then are we to expect it here? If it hath been deemed dangerous (see the next Objection) to bring before the legislature a scheme to strengthen the church out of its own sources, what would it be to propose having it done out of the public revenue? With humble submission then, the points "maturely to be considered by those who are anxious for the establishment" seem to be—whether it be more expedient to suffer the church to remain on its present acknowledged inefficient footing, in hopes of future public aid, which there is so very little probability of obtaining, or to endeavour to effect it immediately out of our own sources?—Whether, if any prelate could be found hardy enough to bring forward the proposition of public bounty, his lordship would not do it with a better grace, and with a better chance of succeeding, after we had manifested our own exertions?—Whether the doing so would be more likely to keep the door shut against, as it ever hath been, or to open it to parliamentary bounty? Since increasing the number of resident parochial clergy is universally admitted to be an object of very great national advantage; and since

parliamentary grants, they cannot be built at all. Neither can the permitting of part of the money, appropriated to churches, to be applied towards glebe-houses, be alledged as an exception of any moment. It is, in truth, much rather to be lamented, there was not a demand for the whole sum for the purposes originally intended by the legislature.

(24) See the Cyclopædia under the word AUGMENTATION, also Burne's Eccl. Laws under the head of FIRST-FRUIT.

glebe-houses and cultivated glebes cannot be denied to be national improvements, in the general not to be expected from the incumbents of the common run of our benefices; would we not have reason to hope for, I had almost written to DEMAND from the legislature at least 100l. towards the necessary buildings on every glebe of 20l. per ann. provided out of our own sources?

"It would be dangerous to introduce church matters, and the affairs of the clergy, to public agitation, in the present critical state of our own and other churches."

I REALLY did not know before, that "our church" was in a more critical state at present than usual. Tithes are paid, it is true, with an ill will; but so they have been these hundreds of years, and so, it is probable, they will ever continue to be.— "The present critical state of other churches," it may be presumed, alludes to France. Now, the subsequent transactions of their famous Assembly, (25) must be an alarming lesson, if any thing can, to our gentlemen of rank, title and fortune to convince them, how cautious they ought to be of intermeddling in their legislative capacity in affairs in which they have no concern, but as the common and constitutional protectors of the establishments, the persons, and properties of every class and denomination of people; lest it recoil upon themselves with redoubled mischief.— Were I not, then, fearful of being thought over-presumptuous, I would earnestly entreat the rulers and governors of the church maturely to consider; whether before the awful memento is forgotten, be not the very best time for their lordships to endeavour to rectify defects, and to remove impediments, which the

(25) SEE Mr. Burke on the French Revolution.

Bishop of Cloyne hath demonstratively proved to retard the progress of the Protestant religion, and to impede the civilization of the people; nay, to endanger the very existence of the constitution; of which melancholy truths every prelate in the kingdom must be equally convinced with his lordship. Besides, church property in France presented tempting, and perhaps could bear useful loppings; our's was so completely thinned at the Reformation, that it cannot now admit of the slightest pruning, even by the most delicate hand. A skilful one may, indeed, advantageously lead a few spare branches to furnish vacant spaces; but this is all that can possibly be attempted with any degree of prudence or safety.

As to the "danger of introducing church matters, and the affairs of the clergy to public agitation," I beg leave to ask, doth there a session pass without somewhat relative to the church or clergy being introduced? A few sessions ago, were not sheriffs subjected to severe penalties, in case of neglecting to make returns on processes for first-fruits; and was not this likely to make more noise than any thing here suggested? Yet we know it passed with little or no debate. In the succeeding session, was not part of the money, previously appropriated to the building of churches, diverted to that of glebe-houses, without a single observation; and what can more irrefragably prove the insufficiency of the present fund, than the being obliged to have recourse to this expedient? Unquestionably, if this business were to be taken up in the first instance by the Lower House, it might, and probably would give occasion to declamatory harangues, as unpleasant to the clergy and the real friends of the church, as they would be grateful to Dissenters and pretended friends; but my

hopes are, indeed my persuasion is, that the rulers and guardians of the church will, by bringing it forward themselves, prevent this much-to-be deprecated event from ever happening. As thoroughly as my mind is possessed with the utility and necessity of my object, yet I very much doubt, (even if I thought it unattainable in any other way) whether I would consider it to be a desirable acquisition thus obtained; lest hereafter it might furnish a precedent to the Commons to interfere with church property, where the interests of religion were not concerned. But this may be avoided, and the end answered by the following mode, which I conceive to be entirely constitutional.

LET our prelates represent to the King, as Supreme Head of the Church in temporals, the defects and insufficiency of our present Valor, arising from the unsettled and uncultivated state of the kingdom, when it was made; and pray, that his Majesty would be pleased to order a new one to be framed either in proportion to that in England; or such, as without over-burthening our benefices, would produce a revenue towards providing glebes for some of our poorer parishes, through want of which, the progress of the Protestant religion and the civilization of the people are greatly impeded. In order to frame this Valor, let there be a secret committee of correspondence established between a certain number of English and Irish prelates. There is no bishop, it may be presumed, in either kingdom, who doth not already know, or may not readily learn by an application to some of their more discreet and intelligent clergy, pretty nearly the value (and there is no necessity for scrupulous exactness in this case) of the several benefices in their respective dioceses. Thus the gross revenue of the church in each kingdom may be easily and quietly

quietly ascertained; and a new Valor formed accordingly. Suppose for instance the English bishopricks, exclusive of their commendams, amount to 66,250*l.* and they are subject to 22,750*l.* for first fruits, they are of course rated at a third. If, then, the income of the Irish bishopricks be 75,000*l.* they should be rated at 25,000*l.* which would be a third also. Again, suppose the English benefices amount to 100,000*l.* and they are subject to 20,000*l.* first-fruits, they are then rated at a fifth, so should ours also, let the amount turn out to be what it may. (26) All this may be done without a tittle of the matter transpiring, till a new Valor is laid before the King for the royal approbation, and then introduced to Parliament for the legislative confirmation with a message of recommendation from his Majesty. There will of course be an immediate and an unanimous address of thanks. The Valor will be passed, probably without being attended to; certainly, without any very critical observations. Without pretending in the smallest degree to the gift of prophecy, I will venture to predict, that the only AGITATION within doors will be, who shall be foremost in acknowledging his Majesty's paternal care of his church of Ireland, and applauding the generosity and attention of his prelates. For though it would be improper and impolitic, for the reasons assigned in the 8th page, to subject the present incumbents to the proposed regulations, yet they must be prejudiced and uncandid indeed, who will not give their lordships credit for their generosity on the occasion; since most of them, with reasonable prospects, may look forward to being translated. Without doors it will be a topic of conversation for a few days, or weeks at most; applauded by every sincere and disinterested friend to the constitution in church and state; and the public prints for so long vie with each other, who shall have

(26) The Bishop of Cloyne very justly observes, page 67, that England is the source of our ecclesiastical establishment. Thus then shall we resemble our parent in this, as in every other feature.]

greatest number of, and the most brilliant paragraphs in its praise. Thus harmlessly, if I am not very much mistaken, will the tremendous spectre vanish, at which a few timid persons may really have been; and God forbid, that I or a single individual should suspect any from selfish motives should only have affected to be so shockingly alarmed.

EVERY objection, I have observed upon, having been furnished by the most respectable characters, of whose attachment to, and zeal for the church it would argue equal malice as ignorance in me to doubt; I had for some time determined to burn every line I had written upon the subject; and to endeavour to erase every trace of it from my mind. Upon communicating this resolution to some brethren of my acquaintance, they dissuaded me from it, by representing that, though the general and principal idea had not met with that concurrence of the governors of the church, which I had flattered myself it would have done; yet some of their lordships having allowed, that there were many hints contained in the manuscript, which on a future and more convenient day might, and probably would be found to be useful; I would be culpable in destroying, or suppressing them entirely. To prevent this, and at the same time to obviate my objections to making the scheme public, they suggested to me the expedient of having fifty or sixty copies printed, and the handing of one of them privately to each of the bishops, and to a few of the more intelligent and distinguished among the clergy; that being, by this mode, confined to a limited number of the most unquestionable friends to the establishment, it could not possibly be attended with any mischief, and might hereafter be productive of some benefit to the established religion. Notwithstanding these observations were sufficiently flattering to myself personally; yet, I trust, my principal motive for having acceded to the measure, was the recollecting, how evidently the

the Bishop of Cloyne hath shewn (which hath been since corroborated by the laborious topographical researches of Dr. Beaufort; and indeed, acknowledged by most of the objectors; that, to keep up even the appearance of a Protestant national church in this kingdom, it must be put upon a much more efficient footing, than it is at present; and that my persevering thus far may possibly stimulate others of greater ability and more experience to turn their thoughts to the subject, and propose some more eligible scheme for the purpose; in which case most assuredly I shall have obtained every point I had in view, and consequently must consider myself amply compensated for all the pains I have been at; therefore,

— “ *Si quid novisti, rectius istis ;*
 “ *Candidus, imperti, si non, his utere mecum.*

F I N I S.

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"Conclusio, inquit, A non, his non minus."
 "Et quid rectius rectius est?"